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CHICAGO POLICE SERGEANT AND OFFICER CHARGED WITH STEALING \$5,200 FROM INDIVIDUAL THEY BELIEVED WAS TRANSPORTING DRUG PROCEEDS

CHICAGO — A Chicago police sergeant and a patrol officer were arrested last night on federal charges alleging that they stole \$5,200 in government undercover funds from a cooperating individual who they believed was transporting the cash for drug dealers. The sergeant, **Ronald Watts**, and the officer, **Kallatt Mohammed**, both assigned to a 2nd District tactical team, were each charged with one count of theft of government funds in a criminal complaint that was unsealed today in U.S. District Court. The arrests and charges were announced by Patrick J. Fitzgerald, United States Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois; Robert D. Grant, Special Agent-in-Charge of the Chicago Office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation; and Superintendent Garry F. McCarthy of the Chicago Police Department. The police department's Internal Affairs Division participated in the investigation.

Watts, 48, an 18-year police veteran, and Mohammed, 47, who joined the department 14 years ago, both of Chicago, were released on \$10,000 unsecured bonds after appearing before U.S. Magistrate Judge Maria Valdez in Federal Court. A status hearing was scheduled for 1:30 p.m. on Feb. 21.

On Nov. 21, 2011, after a Cooperating Witness (CS5) — who unbeknownst to Watts and Mohammed was working with the FBI — told them that he/she was tasked by narcotics traffickers to transport drug proceeds from one location to another, the two officers took the money from CS5, according to the complaint affidavit. Agents conducting surveillance video-recorded the alleged theft, which occurred when Mohammed, driving his personal auto, approached CS5 in the 2700 block of South Vernon and took a bag containing \$5,200 from CS5. Later, the officers paid CS5 \$400 for allowing them to steal the drug proceeds, the charges allege.

Based on CS5's prior dealings with Watts, including an instance when Watts and CS5 allegedly engaged in a similar transaction, the affidavit states that Watts had told CS5 in September 2011 that CS5 should call him or go to the station and ask for Watts or Mohammed to alert them whenever CS5 would be transporting money for drug dealers.

On Nov. 18, 2011, CS5 called Watts and told him in a recorded conversation that he/she had "one going on," which would happen no later than Nov. 21. On that day, CS5 called Watts and said that CS5 was going to pick up a bag from a car near the intersection of 26th Street and Martin Luther King Drive and walk it to another car on 29th Street. Watts told CS5 that he would be in the area. Four minutes after receiving the call from CS5, phone records showed that Watts called a number belonging to Mohammed, allegedly to coordinate Mohammed's participation in stealing the drug money purportedly being delivered by CS5, the affidavit states. Phone records also showed subsequent calls between Watts and Mohammed, it adds.

After Mohammed allegedly took the bag containing the money from CS5, did not give CS5 any money in return, and told CS5 to meet him near 30th and King Drive, CS5 then called Watts and discussed meeting Mohammed to obtain a portion of the money. Minutes after that conversation, agents watched as Watts and Mohammed met in the area of 5700 and 5800 South Princeton. About 20 minutes later, agents recovered the bag that Mohammed had taken from CS5 in an alley behind

the 5900 block of South LaSalle Street, approximately a half-mile from the location where agents observed Watts and Mohammed meeting. The bag was empty.

CS5 called Watts again a short time later and met him near 22nd and Canal streets, where, in a recorded conversation, Watts handed CS5 \$400. “Who always takes care of you?” Watts allegedly said to CS5. Phone records showed two additional calls between Watts and Mohammed within the next 15 minutes, according to the affidavit.

Theft of government funds carries a maximum penalty of 10 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine. If convicted, the Court must impose an reasonable sentence under federal sentencing statutes and the advisory United States Sentencing Guidelines.

The Government is being represented in court by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Benjamin F. Langner and Margaret J. Schneider.

The public is reminded that a complaint contains only charges and is not evidence of guilt. The defendants are presumed innocent and are entitled to a fair trial at which the government has the burden of proving guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

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